

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

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R 011143Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8803

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 1876

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: ASEC, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: CALL ON PRESIDENT FRANGIE: GALLAGHER AND DYKES

REF: SUTATE 46180

1. ACCOMPANIED BY ACTION DCM WARING, I CALLED ON FRANGIE MORNING MARCH 1. I TOLD HIM HOW HAPPY I WAS TO SEE HIM AGAIN UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS WHICH WERE MUCH BETTER FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW THAN LAST TIME I SAW HIM AND I ASSUMED ALSO FROM HIS. HE SAID THINGS WERE INDEED BETTER AND HE WAS SATISFIED WITH THE WAY THEY WERE GOING. HE WAS NOT DRAWN OUT BEYOND THAT.

2. I THEN PASSED HIM SECRETARY KISSINGER'S PERSONAL THANKS PER REFTTEL. HE GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED THEM. HE SAID HE HAD TALKED TO THE SYRIAN GENERALS FIRST (JAMIL AND CHEHABI) BUT AFTER HEARING NOTHING MORE FROM THEM FOR SEVERAL DAYS HE HAD PERSONALLY CONTACTED DR. NAJIB ABU-HAYDER AND ASKED THAT MESSAGE BE PASSED TO HABASH REQUESTING RELEASE OF THE MEN. FRANGIE SAID THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME HE HAD EVER GOTTEN IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH HABASH AND MADE IT CLEAR THE WHOLE THING HAD BEEN SOMEWHAT DISTASTEFUL TO HIM. HE SAID ABU-HAYDER HAD REPORTED BACK THAT THE MESSAGE WAS DELIVERED, THOUGH HE DID NOT GO INTO ANY DETAILS.

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3. LATER IN THE CONVERSATION, FRANGIE ASKED IF THE MEN HAD BEEN MALTREATED. WARING AND I EXPLAINED THAT

THEY HAD BEEN INTERROGATED AND BEATEN IN THE BEGINNING AND GENERALLY KEPT IN CRAMPED QUARTERS. HOWEVER, MENTAL STATE AT LEAST OF GALLAGHER SEEMED TO BE QUITE GOOD DESPITE THE FACT HE HAD BEEN THE ONE PHYSICALLY MALTREATED MORE THAN DYKES. THE TWO MEN HAD TRAVELED FIRST TO ATHENS AND THEN TO THE U.S. WITHOUT NEED FOR MEDICAL ASSISTANCE. HOWEVER, WE NOTED THAT NONE

OF THE LETTERS ACCEPTED FROM THEIR FAMILIES HAD BEEN

DELIVERED TO THE MEN UNTIL JUST BEFORE THEIR RELEASE.

4. FRANGIE ASKED IF THEY HAD BEEN KEPT IN SABRA CAMP THE WHOLE TIME AND I REPLIED THAT SEEMED TO BE THE CASE. HE ASKED WHAT IT WAS THE PEOPLE INTERROGATING THEM WERE AFTER. I REPLIED THAT THEY SEEMED TO BE AFTER A STATEMENT FROM THE MEN THAT THEY WERE MEMBERS OF THE CIA. HE ASKED IF THERE HAD BEEN ANY RANSOM DEMANDS TO WHICH WE REPLIED IN THE NEGATIVE. HE REMARKED THAT I ASSUMED THERE HAD BEEN NO FURTHER DEMANDS FOR ANYTHING FROM GOL ONCE THE DELIVERY OF THE ARMS HAD FALLEN THROUGH. FRANGIE REPEATED THAT HE HAD FORBIDDEN THE ARMS DEAL AND THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO OTHER DEMANDS OR DEAL.

4. CONVERSATION THEN TURNED TO OTHER SUBJECTS INCLUDING FRANGIE'S INTEREST IN PLO-480 ASSISTANCE WHICH WARING TOLD HIM HAD ALREADY BEEN COMMUNICATED TO WARING BY GOL (SEPTEL). FRANGIE ALSO PUT IN A VISA INTERVENTION FOR A DESERVING YOUNG MAN FROM ZHGHORTA.

5. I REMARKED THAT AMBASSADOR GOLDEY ADDED HIS PERSONAL THANKS AND SENT HIS BEST REGARDS. THE PRESIDENT INQUIRED ABOUT THE AMBASSADOR'S HEALTH AT SOME LENGTH AND EXPRESSED HAPPINESS AT THE PROSPECT OF SEEING HIM SOON BACK IN THE LEBANON. WE LEFT AFTER SOME MORE SMALL TALK WHICH FRANGIE HIMSELF FREQUENTLY INITIATED. HE WAS MUCH LESS TIRED THAN LAST TIME I CALLED ON HIM
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(FEB. 12) AND VERY FRIENDLY.

6. RE PUBLICITY, WE ARE NOT GIVING ANY STATEMENT TO THE PRESS, BUT ARE PREPARED TO SAY IN RESPONSE TO A SPECIFIC QUESTION THAT EXPRESSION OF USG SATISFACTION WITH RELEASE OF GALLAGHER AND DYKES AND GRATITUDE THEREFOR FIGURED AMONG SUBJECTS DISCUSSED WITH PRESIDENT FRANGIE TODAY.

7. COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST WE HAVE HEARD FROM ANY SOURCE
OF FRANGIE'S DIRECT INTERVENTION THROUGH NAJIB ABU-
HAYDER WITH HABASH. IT WAS INTERESTING THAT THE PRESIDENT
DID THIS BOTH IN TERMS OF HIS RELATIONS WITH USG
AND WITH THE PALESTINIANS. DURING PERIOD OF SMALL
TALK MENTIONED ABOVE, HE REMARKED THAT HABASH WAS STUPID
AND DID MANY THINGS WRONG. HE THOUGHT IT IRONIC
THAT HABASH WAS A LEBANESE CITIZEN (AS WELL AS OF PALESTINIAN ORIGIN).

LAMBRAKIS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PL 480, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PRISONERS RELEASE, CONGRATULATORY MESSAGES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976BEIRUT01876
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X2
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760077-0884
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197603109/aaaadsfc.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 APR 2004 by GarlanWA>; APPROVED <23 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CALL ON PRESIDENT FRANGIE: GALLAGHER AND DYKES
TAGS: ASEC, PINS, PINT, LE, US, (FRANJIYAH, SULAYMAN), (KISSINGER, HENRY A), (DYKES, WILLIAM R), (GALLAGHER, CHARLES D)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006